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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000705

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: GOI COMMITTEE PROPOSES UNIFICATION OF MAALE ADUMIM
AND QEDAR SETTLEMENTS, ALLOWING EXPANSION

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. NGO Peace Now confirmed press reports that the Israeli Ministry of Interior (MOI) internal panel recommended unification of West Bank settlements Maale Adumim and Qedar (southeast of Maale Adumim). This step could potentially annex 3,000 acres of land to Maale Adumim and pave the way for the building of 6,000 new housing units. The lawyer representing the two Palestinian municipalities who claim the 3,000 acres said he will file a petition in the Israeli High Court of Justice to prevent the move. A visit by Poloffs on April 27 revealed no new changes on the ground at Maale Adumim, Qedar, or E-1. The PA strongly condemned the move. End summary.

Israeli MOI Panel Recommends
Combining Maale Adumim and Qedar

12. (C) Head of NGO Peace Now's Settlement Watch team Hagit Ofraan briefed Poloff on April 27 on an Israeli Ministry of Interior (MOI) internal recommendation to combine West Bank settlements Maale Adumim and Qedar (southeast of Maale Adumim). This step could potentially result in the annexation of 3,000 acres (11,500 dunams) of land to Maale Adumim that is claimed by the Palestinian municipalities of Abu Dis and Suwaha. Ofraan said that Minister of Interior Eli Yishai is likely to accept the recommendation, and called on the USG to pressure the GOI to reject the plan. According to Ofraan, the unification of Maale Adumim and Qedar is part of a new master plan for Maale Adumim to build 6,000 housing units on the 3,000 acres. If the MOI accepts the internal panel's recommendation, Ofraan said, Qedar will begin receiving its services from Maale Adumim instead of the Gush Etzion regional council. Ofraan claimed that the recommendation was calculated to convince the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) to accept a routing of the security barrier around both Maale Adumim and Qedar.

Appeal Against Security Barrier Route Rejected

13. (C) Shlomo Lekker, the Israeli lawyer for Abu Dis and Sawaha, told Poloff on April 27 that his appeal against this proposed route of the security barrier was rejected by the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MOD) on April 23. Lekker said he will now file a new petition in the HCJ, which he hopes will lead to an injunction order prohibiting new construction in the area.

No Change On The Ground - Yet

14. (C) Poloffs visited Maale Adumim, Qedar, and E-1 on April 27 and observed no changes. The eastern branch of

Qedar settlement is located approximately one kilometer from Maale Adumim. A significant number of Bedouin residential structures lie between Maale Adumim and Qedar.

Palestinian Reaction

15. (U) PA Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudaynah publicly condemned the step, accusing the GOI of "intentionally destroying international and American efforts" to move the peace process forward.

WALLES